

by mankind has appeared to the religious-minded to be a convincing proof of Divine intervention. Evolutionist philosophers have felt obliged to attribute their existence to the discriminating power of the human intellect which could perceive utilitarian reasons for the adoption of behaviour that to the unenlightened appears to be a foolish disregard of practical interests. But, considered dispassionately, these impulses appear to be undoubtedly instinctive. There is hardly a man, however degraded, whose pulse is not quickened by the display of self-sacrificing courage, of self-denial, of undaunted chastity. No reasoning calculations could have evoked so useless, so painful a habit as the ascetic. Indeed, the eccentricities of asceticism are sufficient to prove that its foundations lie far below human ingenuity or the human will. What social conventions could have produced an emotion which is capable of urging mankind to the unnatural practice of celibacy, to the self-infliction of torture, even to self-mutilation—all supremely useless, from a practical point of view, to society and to themselves?

Our search for the germs of these impulses amongst the lower animals is impeded by our inability to enter into their minds. But it is not altogether fruitless. Many insects display self-devotion in the cause of their community, and the unresisting submissiveness of the males of certain

kinds to be eaten by the females
excites our
astonishment. A cock will deny himself
for his
family of hens : both horses and dogs
appear to
possess a sense of justice : and we
may perhaps
see in the practice of monogamy by
many birds
and quadrupeds, some indication of a
self-denying

¶ Certain mantises and beetles. This curious
self-devotion also
occurs amongst some scorpions and spiders.